Can you explain the requirements for institutions to submit course equivalencies as part of recent legislation? How will this requirement be communicated with institutions?

Legislation passed in March of this year calls for THEC to create a database to inform potential students with military experience of the academic credit available to them prior to enrollment at a state institution of higher education.[1] As part of this requirement, institutions will submit course equivalencies to THEC on or before December 15, 2018, detailing how credit may be applied toward the institution's respective credentials.

Detailed guidance on the format of course equivalencies will be provided in accordance with the legislation by November 1, 2017. The basic requirements are listed within the legislation and currently available here: http://publications.tnsosfiles.com/acts/110/pub/pc0031.pdf.

Evaluation will occur at the institutional level. Institutions will determine which credit is appropriate to award using the American Council on Education (A.C.E.) recommendations as listed in the A.C.E military guide and on Joint Services Transcripts (JSTs).

THEC is working to collect input from systems and institutional representatives on the best process to fulfill the legislative requirements. THEC is also planning convenings around the topic, though no schedule for the convenings has been set yet. THEC will communicate to all institutions when these convenings have been scheduled.

As part of this grant, what modifications to the process of evaluating military experience for the purpose of awarding academic credit will be necessary?

Public institutions use the A.C.E. military guide and Joint Services Transcripts as the basis for recommendations on how military experience equates to academic credit. The institutions interpret the recommendations in relation

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[1] [1] State of Tennessee (2017) Public Chapter 31. Previously Senate Bill 1232. http://publications.tnsosfiles.com/acts/110/pub/pc0031.pdf

to academic requirements. Grantees will work to communicate the availability of academic credit for military experience to veterans before the student enrolls.[2]

How was this grant announcement distributed? How can I learn about opportunities for future grants from THEC?

THEC works to communicate with the presidents of institutions regarding the availability of grants like Veteran Reconnect. This grant announcement was first distributed to presidents of public institutions through an internal listserv, then distributed with the help of the Tennessee Board of Regents to institutional contacts with subject matter expertise in prior learning assessment throughout the state. Finally, the announcement was sent to representatives of private institutions through the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association.

Who will the grant serve?

This grant is likely to benefit military-affiliated students. Within the RFP "veteran" means the following: Persons who are active duty members of the armed services and those who are currently serving in active status in the National Guard or Reserves -and-Persons who are separated from the military, such as retirees or service members who left the military after a period of active service or training.[3]

What is the source for the evaluation? What other references may help in researching for this grant?

In 2013, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) produced individual reports on prior learning assessment practices for six public institutions. Many questions that appear within those reports also appear on this assessment. In 2016, THEC distributed a survey on practices in

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[2] http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Military-Guide-Online.aspx
[3] Based on: Vacchi, David T., and Joseph B. Berger. 2014. "Student Veterans in Higher Education." In *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research,* edited by Michael B. Paulsen, 93–151.

evaluating credit for military service[4]. Results of this survey inform the interpretation of the results.

The framework of the evaluation is based on research describing "critical factors" that when in place, give students greater opportunities to utilize prior learning assessed credits (from Hoffman et. al, 2009). Modifications to these factors reflect this evaluation's purpose of describing current practices relevant to academic credit for military service.[5]

What data points are required for the proposal?

The request for proposals asks for relevant data on the student population. For this question, institutions are not being evaluated on their relative ability to identify and track student veterans. The answer provides context for the current state of services to veterans at the institution.

For the introduction section the following pieces of data will be sufficient to describe the potential student veteran population:

1) The number of veterans within a defined coverage area, as estimated by the American Community Survey. Institutions may reference the document provided on the Veteran Reconnect website for this information: https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/thec/attachments/2014_Veteran_Population_Estimates,TN.pdf

2) The number of students currently receiving VA benefits with specifications where possible for dependents for the most recent year available. Institutions will provide this number.

What budget items do you expect? Are there items that should definitely be included?

Examples of use of funds include, but are not limited to: support for marketing, outreach, stipends for existing faculty and staff, hiring new staff in

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[4] THEC (2016) Institutional Practices for Awarding Academic Credit for Military Experience. Limited distribution. See: http://tinyurl.com/THEC-PLA-Survey

[5] Hoffman, T., Travers, N. L., Evans, M. and Treadwell, A. (2009). Researching critical factors impacting PLA programs: A multi-institutional study on best practices. CAEL

accordance with guidelines (see appendix D), cost for hosting meetings on campus, and travel for up to two meetings hosted by THEC.

Potential grantees should budget for travel for 4-5 representatives to at least two centralized trainings. THEC will work to ensure the trainings are set in a location convenient to grantees (not necessarily Nashville). If possible, THEC will work to provide funding for travel as part of its technical assistance provision.

Can funds be used for scholarships?

Scholarships are not an allowable expense for the Veteran Reconnect grant funds. Upon contracting, THEC will work with each grantee to ensure each budget contains only allowable expenses.

Can I use the third round of veteran reconnect grant funding to fund efforts begun in the first or second rounds?

Previous Veteran Reconnect grantees are eligible to apply for this third round of grants. Proposals for the third round of Veteran Reconnect grants must adhere to the requirements in the RFP. If your institution received Veterans Reconnect grants previously and the work directly connects to credit for military experience, your proposal should make the case that continuing that work would allow your institution to meet the requirements put forth in the RFP.

Can I use funds towards retaining existing personnel?

Refer to Appendix D of the RFP to see hiring criteria. These criteria apply to existing personnel as well as newly hired personnel. Successful proposals will justify new job roles for these personnel, in relation to the provided grant criteria, and hiring guidelines in appendix D of the RFP. If you plan to use funds for existing personnel, within section 4 of your proposal, provide details on how the employees job duties will change based on the employee's obligation to the fulfilling the grant criteria (see p.4 of the RFP for grant criteria).

Veteran Reconnect Round 3 FAQ
Are slides from the webinar available?

Yes, the webinar is available by accessing this link:
https://tngov.webex.com/tngov/lsr.php?RCID=3c2cd1965c1e3fc3b510af802a9dadc0
Slides from the webinar are also available, using this link:
http://prezi.com/ki8vcemp7ppp/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share